THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) to (c) Pawan Hans Limited entered into an agreement with M|s Westland Helicopters of UK, for purchase of 21 Westland helicopters at a cost of Pound 65 million. The entire cost of Pound 65 million was covered under an outright grant given by British Government under D.D.A. Grant. The manufacturers also paid a onetime lumsum operation subsidy of Pound 10 million for purchase of six spare engines and accessories.

As a result of problems faced during operational performance, the entire fleet of Westland helicopters was finally grounded on 9-2-91 for reasons of operational safety and economic viability.

The total maintenance cost incurred to date is Rs. 34.9 crores.

(d) A report of the Committee constituted to examine various aspects of the purchase deal is available in Parliament Library with S. No. 358-418 R. The Committee report does not call for disciplinary action against any official.

(e) Earlier, it had been decided to dispose the entire fleet through global tenders but since no bids were received by the prescribd date, it has now been decided to dispose these helicopters through negotiations with parties interest in purchase of these helicopters and accessories.

Air India flight from New Delhi to Frankfurt

368. DR. BAPU KALDATE: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the total Air India flights from New Delhi to Frankfurt and back during April, 1994;

(b) the total number of passengers carried by Air India both ways stating the percentage of shortfall in the capacity utilisation; and

(c) what are the reasons for the shortfall in the passenger traffic on Air India on this route?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) and (b) During April, 1994 Air India operated 52 flights on the India|Frankfurt|India sector and carried 6522 passengers. The capacity utilisation during the month was 35 per cent against the target of average capacity utilisation of 63.2 per cent.

(c) The reasons for shortfall in capacity utilisation are :

(i) traffic is usually low during the month of April;

(ii) competition by foreign Carriers.

Selling of Tickets at Discount by Foreign Airlines

369. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that foreign airlines operating from India are selling tickets at discount rates without the prior approval of the DGCA;

(b) if so, the number of such cases that came to the notice of Government during the past 6 months;

(c) whether Government propose to contemplate any strict action in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the impact of such concessional offer by foreign airlines on our airlines?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) to (e) In June, 1994, The Board of Airline Representatives of India represented to DGCA that some foreign airlines operating from India particularly the European carriers

were indulging on stariff undercounting in contravention of the Aircraft Rules, 1937. Such under-cutting adversely affects the business of our national carriers. A meeting of all foreign operators was convened by DGCA on 8-7-1994 to discuss this issue and all operators were advised to strictly follow the relevant provisions of the Aircraft Rules. 1937 regarding fixation and charging of tariffs. A team has also been constituted by the Directol General of Civil Aviation with a representative of Reserve Bank of India to go through the financial records of airlines and their agents from time to time to detect undercutting of fares.

Death of Governor of Punjab and Himachal Pradesh in air crash

370. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM:
DR. BAPU KALDATE:
SHRIMATI KAMALA SINHA:
SHRI VIRENDRA KATARIA:
SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA:
SHRI ANANT RAM JAISWAL:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have ordered an equiry into the air crash in which Governor of Punjab and Himachal Pradesh with his family and other crew members were killed recently;

(b) if so, whether any preliminary investigations have been conducted;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) wnether the Union Government propose to examine the worthiness of the planes with each of the State Government;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) what steps have been taken for the bereaved family Members of the late Governor of Punjab and the crew members?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) to (c) The accident is under investigation by an Inspector of Accidents appointed by the Director General of Civil Aviation Under Rule 71 of the Aircraft Rules, 1937. The Government also propose to appoint a Court of Inquiry headed by a sitting Judge of the High Court of Himachal Pradesh to investigate the accident under Rule 75 of Aircraft Rules, 1937.

(d) and (e) The State Government aircraft are maintained, inspected and certified in accordance with schedules prescribed by the manufacturers and duly approved by the Director General of Civil Aviation.

(f) The information is being collected from the Government of Punjab and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Conversion of Bangalore Airport into International Airport

371. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry have made a request to HAL and Defence Ministry for permission to convert the Bangalore Airport into an International Airport;

(b) if so, whether the HAL and Defence Ministry have accorded the necessary permission;

(c) if not, what are the reasons for not according the permission when the Airport is already used by the Civil Aviation and International cargo carriers; and

(d) whether Defence Ministry will be approached for permitting the Deptt. of Civil Aviation to convert Bangalore Airport as an International Airport?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) to (c) No such request has been made for conversion of Bangalore airport into international airport.